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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
FROM: Dave Grier
SUBJECT: CT Recruiting

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Some months ago you held a meeting to discuss CT recruiting. Here are a few thoughts on the same subject.

My central premise is that good prospects are slipping through our fingers because of frustration with the nature and pace of the recruitment process. Although I cannot document this assertion, my experience in working with applicants over the last five years and in the accounts of others strongly support it.

The weakest point in the process is the role played by processing assistants. They handle most of the contacts with applicants; yet the processing assistants, who are junior officers, are often unqualified to answer questions and are sometimes no match for the applicant's intellectual level. The consequence is that many applicants experience an initial letdown and subsequent frustration at having no one to whom to turn.

This weakness has not gone unnoticed. An effort was made to solve it in 1985, when a more senior officer, working in tandem with the processing officer, was put in charge of each case. Yet so far as I can learn, the processing assistants continue to handle most contacts.

Another problem is that the 120-day rule imposed by John McMahon several years ago is not always honored. Delays inevitably lead to frustration and to a mistaken assumption of rejection on the part of the applicant. By the time the applicant is recontacted, other job prospects have been pursued, and sometimes it is too late.

A third difficulty is the mind set of many in CIA concerning recruitment. Although good recruiters realize that they are competing in a hot job market, some take the view that CIA only has to open files, run applicants through tests and then make decisions. This leaves out the most important element of recruiting--competing vigorously for the best applicants and in doing so selling the Agency to applicants.

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Remedies for some of these problems are fairly obvious.

- Processing assistants should be confined to processing, while an expanded corps of experienced officers should undertake direct, frequent and cooperative contact with applicants.
- The 120-day rule should be enforced.
- A seminar or training program for recruiters should be established, and the stress should be placed on the need to win over the applicant and sell CIA.

Here are some related thoughts.

The graduate intern and undergraduate coop programs have proven to be excellent recruiting grounds, with approximately 40 percent of the graduate interns ending up as staff officers. These programs should be greatly expanded. Currently, qualified applicants are sometimes turned away because no positions exist. If these two programs are to be used productively as "farm clubs," positions for well qualified applicants should be found. I can think of no measure that would increase recruiting faster than doubling the graduate portion of the program.

Much on-campus recruiting is accomplished at "job day" sessions or their equivalents. Efforts are also underway to construct a network of professors willing to make direct referrals. This latter method has great merit and should be pushed hard. Self-selection on job day should be the backup system, not the primary system.

Finally, the CT program should become the entry level training program for new professional employees, regardless of which directorate acts as sponsor. Although this is currently a goal, it is often overlooked in the interest of placing employees in the trenches as quickly as possible. The CT program provides the cement that enables us to hold new employees during the probationary years when frustration levels sometimes run high; it is also a door to the one Agency concept.

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